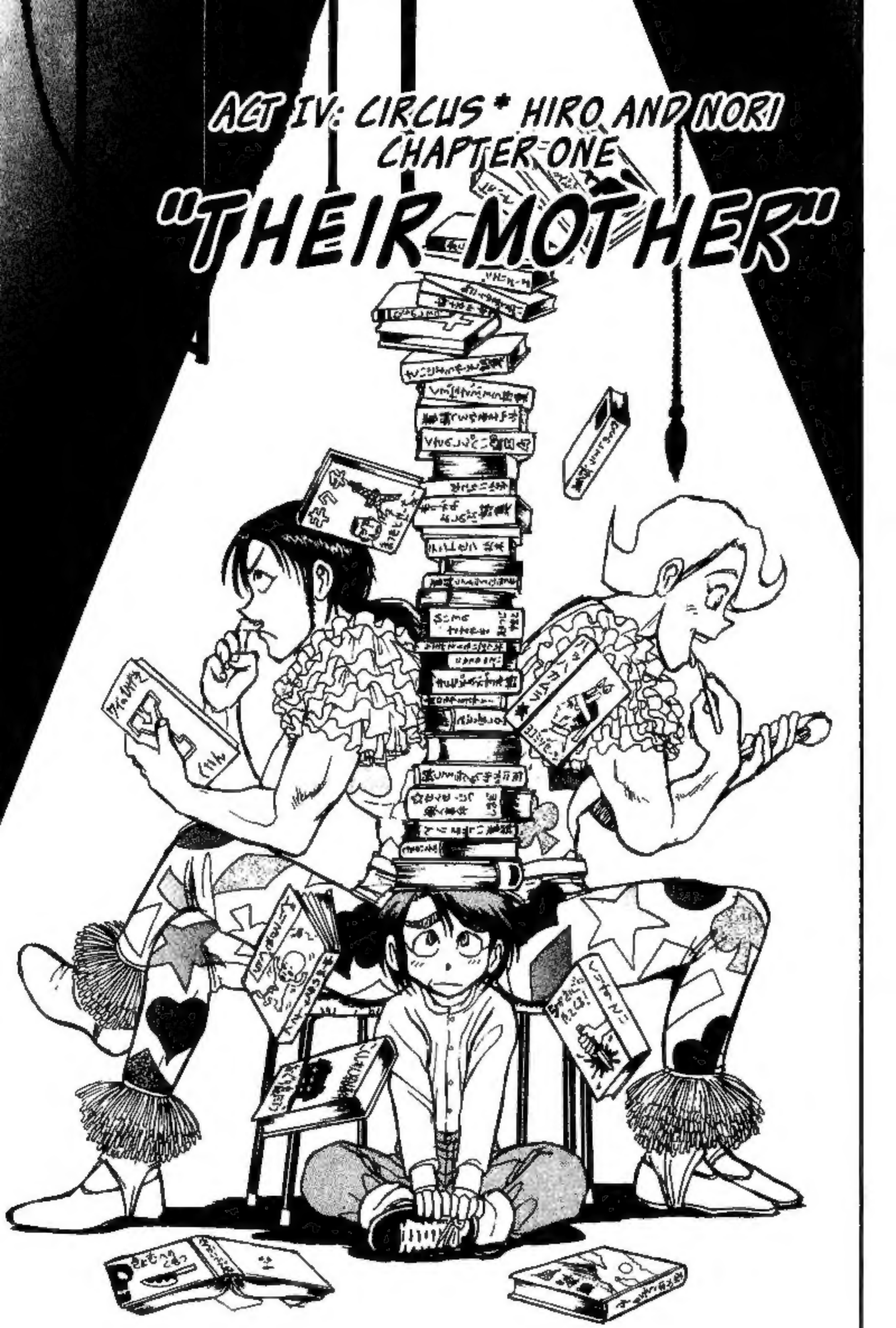
ACT IV: CIRCUS * HIRO AND NORI
CHAPTER ONE
"THEIR MOTHER"



WE ARE CURRENTLY MAKING OUR WAY WEST.

RR

HELLO, EVERY-ONE!

AS FOR ME...

TARANDA, WHO OFFERED US A BIG TRUCK, JUST FELL ASLEEP.

SO WE ARE TRAVELING TO FIND A PLACE WHERE THEY'LL LET US DO IT.

I LEARNED THAT THE LAW HERE DOESN'T ALLOW CIRCUS SHOWS ON THE STREETS ...

... I'M REALLY UNCOM-FORTABLE!

VRR R OO

WELL ...

MM

IT'S BROKEN ...

MM

RRRM

SAY, CAN I TURN ON THE RADIO?

APPARENTLY, NORI AND HIRO DON'T LIKE ME THAT MUCH...

VRRMM

IT TAKES VERY LITTLE FOR THEM TO CHANGE THEIR MIND.

HA HA HA! THEY'RE STUPID, BUT THEY'RE NOT THAT BAD!

WHAT WILL?

I HOPE IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT ...

I THINK YOUR TWO ADOPTED SONS DON'T LIKE THE YOUNG MASTER VERY MUCH...

I'M DRIVING THE SMALL TRUCK?!

COME WITH ME, HIRO!

YOU TOO, MASARU!

...IS HIRO NAKAMACHI. HE'S 20 YEARS OLD AND IS VERY GIFTED IN ALL ROPE-WALKING EXERCISES, AS WELL AS THE TRAM-POLINE.

AND THE OTHER ONE, WITH THE SLIGHTLY WAVY HAIR ...

...NORIYUKI NAKAMACHI. HE'S 21 YEARS OLD. I TAUGHT HIM TO BALANCE HIMSELF ON SEVEN STACKED CHAIRS.

THE BLACK-HAIRED BOY IS ...

NORI WAS ABANDONED IN A PUBLIC PARK ON A COLD WINTER DAY.

I ADOPTED THEM WHEN THEY WERE 9 AND 10 YEARS OLD. THEY HAD BOTH BEEN ABANDONED BY THEIR PARENTS ...

...IT WAS ON THE SCENIC TOP OF A SKY-SCRAPER.

AS FOR HIRO...

YOU ARE MARRIED, MR. NAKA-MACHI?

MY WIFE WAS THE ONE WHO FOUND THEM...

...AND HER NAME WAS FUSAE.

SHE WAS AN EQUILI-BRIST...

SHE ALWAYS SAID THAT SHE COULDN'T LEAVE A CRYING CHILD ALONE...

LISTEN, BOY!

VRROMM

POOR LITTLE DARLING! BUT YOU MANAGED TO KEEP SHIROGANE WITH YOU, AS A NANNY!

SO... YOU LEFT YOUR HOUSE BECAUSE YOUR DAD WAS MEAN?! IS THAT IT?!

REALLY ?

YEAH! WE WERE ABANDONED, TOO!

RROM

DON'T THINK WE'LL TAKE PITY ON YOU! JUST BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PARENTS!

YOU'VE DEFINITELY PUT HER IN A VERY UNCOM-FORTABLE SITUATION !!!

YOU DIRTY LITTLE WORM!!! DON'T EVEN THINK OF ABUSING SHIROGANE'S KINDNESS!!!

I'VE HEARD THAT SOME PEOPLE GET OVEREXCITED JUST BY TALKING... NOW I BELIEVE IT...

...BUT I HAVEN'T TOLD THE NAKAMACHIS THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT US YET!

THAT'S PARTIALLY TRUE ...

YOU'RE JUST A KID!

DON'T PRETEND TO UNDER-STAND EVERY-THING!!

ZONG

THAT'S NO REASON TO MONOPOLIZE SHIROGANE! WHY SHOULD SHE SACRIFICE HERSELF TO TAKE CARE OF YOU?! JUST BECAUSE HER MOTHER WAS YOUR NANNY?!

WE DON'T CARE IF YOUR ONCE-VERY-RICH FAMILY WAS RUINED AND IS NOW DIRT POOR!!!

VOLONG

ALWAYS IN LONG SLEEVES AND PANTS, EVEN IN THE SUMMER!

...AND YOUR SLENDER BODY!

WITH YOUR LITTLE MIDDLE-CLASS FACE!

EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM MAKES ME MAD!

... WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO ME?!

ZOOHH

GRRR!!! I LOATHE EVERY SINGLE MOLECULE IN THIS BRAT!!!

GOOHH

GRRR

YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL ME?

SAY... WHAT DO YOU LIKE SO MUCH ABOUT SHIROGANE? I'D LIKE TO KNOW.

I HAVE TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT!

...AND MOST OF ALL, I DON'T THINK I COULD STOP MYSELF FROM SATISFYING THE MANLY AND VIRIL NEED TO PASSIONATELY KISS HER ON THOSE OH SO DELICIOUSLY VOLUPTUOUS LIPS! NO, NO... I'M SURE I COULD NEVER HOLD BACK!!

AND WE HAVEN'T EVEN TALKED ABOUT HER VOICE! SO SILKY AND SEXY. I DON'T EVEN DARE IMAGINE THAT SHE COULD ONE DAY WHISPER MY NAME IN MY EAR WITH THAT VOICE! I THINK I WOULD COMPLETELY LOSE IT!

THERE'S ALSO HER EYES THAT SPARKLE LIKE LITTLE STARS! IF SHE STARED AT ME FOR MORE THAN TEN SECONDS WITH THOSE EYES, I THINK I'D BE SO MOVED MY SPINE WOULD MELT!!

IF I HAD TO COMPARE HER TO AN ACTRESS, I'D SAY SHE'S ANGELINA JOLIE'S TWIN SISTER!

...

AND HER SILVERY HAIR IS SO BEAUTIFUL!! AN INCOMPARABLE BEAUTY! AND...

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND? ARE YOU BLIND OR WHAT!? SHE'S OUTRAGEOUSLY PRETTY! AND HER BODY IS SO FIRM, YET SO FLEXIBLE AT THE SAME TIME!

...

HOW TO CALL SUCH A WOMAN?! SHE'S A REAL "VENUS"!

WHO DOES SHIROGANE REMIND YOU OF?

REALLY? YOU THINK SO TOO?

BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND... SHE REMINDS ME SO MUCH OF HER...

...

... YES ...

WHHHH

...MOMMY?

BLA

BLA BLA

MOMMY!

WHERE ARE YOU?!

MOMMY, COME BACK !!!

MOMMY !

BOMB

EH?

ARE YOU LOST?

BRAVE LITTLE BOYS ...

... SHOULD-N'T CRY!

WE'LL LOOK FOR HER TOGETHER!

COME ON! I'LL HELP YOU FIND YOUR MOM!

...SO WE DECIDED TO ADOPT HIRO AND NORI AND RAISE THEM IN OUR CIRCUS.

WE NEVER DID FIND THEIR PARENTS ...

YOU'RE NOT MY MOTHER! YOU'LL NEVER BE MY MOTHER! SO I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT!!

MY CIRCUS WAS DOING WELL AT THAT TIME, SO THERE WAS NO PROBLEM ON THE FRONT OF RAISING THEM, BUT...

AS YOU KNOW, A CIRCUS IS LIKE A SMALL COMMUNITY.

VERY OFTEN, MANY FAMILIES TRAVEL TOGETHER, SO WE ALWAYS HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THE KIDS COLLECTIVELY.

WHAT IS THIS?! I DON'T WANT IT!!

BAH

...IT TOOK THEM BOTH A LOT OF TIME TO ACCEPT FUSAE.

FH

BUT, NORI WAS VERY DIFFICULT, TOO.

ESPECIALLY HIRO.

HIRO, WAIT!

SHE NEVER GAVE UP...

BAH, IT'S NORMAL! I NEVER STUDIED, SO I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEIR FEELINGS! I'M TOO RUSTIC!

THE OTHERS COMPLAINED OR MADE FUN OF HER.

I'LL MAKE THEM THE BEST PICNIC LUNCH IN THE WORLD!

HIRO AND NORI HAVE A FIELD TRIP AT SCHOOL TOMORROW.

YOU NEVER WANTED TO EAT THE ONIGIRI* SHE LOVINGLY MADE FOR YOU!

IN FACT, HIRO, YOU DIDN'T ACCEPT MOM AT ALL AT THE BEGINNING.

*RICE BALL FILLED WITH VARIOUS SALTY OR PICKLED THINGS, POPULAR IN JAPAN AS A SNACK

...
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT...

YEAH, BUT IT'S BECAUSE ...

YOU NEVER WANTED TO PUT ON THE SHIRT SHE HAD MADE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU! YOU EVEN SOLD IT TO SOMEONE!

YOU'RE ONE TO TALK, NORI!

BUT... YOU ENDED UP ACCEPTING YOUR MOTHER, RIGHT?

ME, TOO... AND I THOUGHT THAT OUR ADOPTIVE MOTHER WAS AN EVIL PERSON WHO LIED TO US.

IN REALITY, WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I UNCONSCIOUSLY THOUGHT THAT THE CIRCUS PEOPLE HAD KIDNAPPED ME...

DOOO

SBLAM

MY WHOLE BODY WAS SHAKING.

I WAS THE ONE IN CHARGE OF CLEANING MY PARENTS' ROOM EVERY DAY...

GHHH

AND I DROPPED IT!! IT BROKE INTO A THOUSAND PIECES!!

I KNEW THE PRICE OF THAT VASE...

SO I THOUGHT THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS TO RUN AWAY...

I KNEW VERY WELL THAT I COULD NEVER PAY IT BACK, EVEN IF I WORKED MY WHOLE LIFE...

MY REAL FAMILY, THE ONE WHO ABANDONED ME, WAS ALSO VERY POOR. SO I TRULY KNEW WHAT THIS VASE REPRESENTED...

GO!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!

AND THEN ...

EVEN THOUGH I WAS STARTING TO GET USED TO THE CIRCUS...

BASH

IDIOT !!

YOU ARE UNIQUE IN THIS WORLD! SO... I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU!

BUT YOU, YOU'RE NOT A VASE!

A VASE IS JUST A MANMADE OBJECT! IF IT BREAKS, YOU CAN ALWAYS GO BUY ANOTHER ONE!

AT THAT MOMENT, I UNDERSTOOD THAT SHE WAS MY REAL MOTHER...

WWW

MAYBE TODAY'S BOYS DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT ANYMORE.

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG, IT WAS A VERY POPULAR GAME WITH BOYS ... THERE WERE MANY WAYS YOU COULD PLAY IT.

MARBLES? ... GLASS MARBLES?

VRROM

...AN AFFAIR WITH MARBLES.

AS FOR NORIYUKI, IT WAS AFTER...

REALLY? THIS KIND OF GAME EXISTED A LONG TIME AGO?

WHEN IT TOUCHED SOMEONE ELSE'S MARBLE, THAT MARBLE BECAME OURS.

WE PUT ALL THE MARBLES ON THE GROUND, AND WE EACH FLICKED ONE OF OUR OWN MARBLES DURING OUR TURNS...

HA HA, I REMEMBER THAT YOU WEREN'T VERY GOOD AT MARBLES.

DON'T EXAGGERATE!

WHADDAYA MEAN, "A LONG TIME AGO"?!

WELL... I MEANT TO SAY ...

IF YOU WERE GOOD AT SOME FASHIONABLE GAMES, YOU COULD MAKE NEW FRIENDS VERY QUICKLY.

BECAUSE OF OUR PARENTS' JOB, WE HAD TO CHANGE SCHOOLS EVERY THREE MONTHS.

WHEN WE WERE KIDS, THERE WAS A "TRAVELING SCHOOL" SYSTEM.

I ENDED UP LOSING ALL MY MARBLES...

AND THE OTHERS ALL MADE FUN OF ME.

IN ONE OF THE SCHOOLS WE ATTENDED, THE BOYS WERE PARTICULARLY OBSESSED WITH IT.

BUT I WAS HORRIBLE AT PLAYING MARBLES...

YOU'RE NOT SALUTING THE PUBLIC?

I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

GOH

WHAT?! YOU LOST ALL YOUR MARBLES ?!

MOM WAS OUTRAGED!

AND FROM THAT DAY ON...

SHE TRAINED ME SERIOUSLY.

RIGHT AWAY, WITHOUT EVEN CHANGING ...

...SHE SHOWED ME SOME TRICKS.

CHA

WHEN YOU MASTER THIS SPECIAL TECHNIQUE, YOU'LL HAVE NO RIVAL!

RELAX YOURSELF!

IF YOU HIT IT STRONGLY ON THIS SIDE...

TAC

LOOK!

MOM WAS ALWAYS FULL OF ENERGY...

YES...

SHE BECAME ...

... MY ONLY REAL MOTHER.

AT THAT MOMENT ...

SHE EXPLODED WITH JOY, AS IF IT WAS HER WHO HAD WON...

ONE DAY, I CAME BACK FROM SCHOOL WITH A HUGE BAG OF MARBLES.

SOMETHING TERRIBLE...

... HAPPENED.

BUT... THEN...

HM?